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First Nation Children Living Off Reserve

Article

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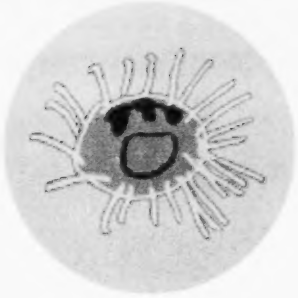

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First Nations Children living off reserve

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The Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS) provides an extensive set of data about Aboriginal (Métis, Inuit, and off-reserve First Nations) children under six years of age in urban, rural, and northern locations across Canada. The Aboriginal Children's Survey was designed to provide a picture of the early development of Aboriginal children and the social and living conditions in which they are learning and growing.

The survey was developed by Statistics Canada and Aboriginal advisors from across the country and was conducted jointly with Human Resources and Social Development Canada.

First Nations Children Under Six Years Old Living Off Reserve

This fact sheet provides information on the families and communities of First Nations children under six years old living off reserve, as reported in the Aboriginal Children's Survey and the Census in 2006. Please note that children were identified as 'North American Indian'; however the term "First Nations" is used in this fact sheet. This report focuses on First Nations children living off reserve in the provinces and all First Nations children living in the territories.

In 2006, the Census enumerated about 47,000 First Nations children under the age of six years living off reserve in Canada.

The majority of off-reserve First Nations children were in urban areas (78%) and the remaining 22% lived in rural areas.

About two-thirds (67%) of First Nations children living off reserve were Registered or Treaty Indians.

Young off-reserve First Nations children and their families

The 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey found that 90% of off-reserve First Nations children were being raised by more than one person. Mothers were most commonly reported as being involved in raising the child (93%) followed by fathers (72%) and grandparents (44%). More than one-quarter (28%) of First Nations children had other relatives (such as siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles) playing a part in raising them. About 17% had non-relatives involved in raising them; for example, child care providers or teachers.

The 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey asked how often the child talked or played together with different people, focusing attention on each other for five minutes or more. Off-reserve First Nations children were most likely to receive focused attention at least once a day from their mothers (93%), followed by siblings (69%), and fathers (64%).

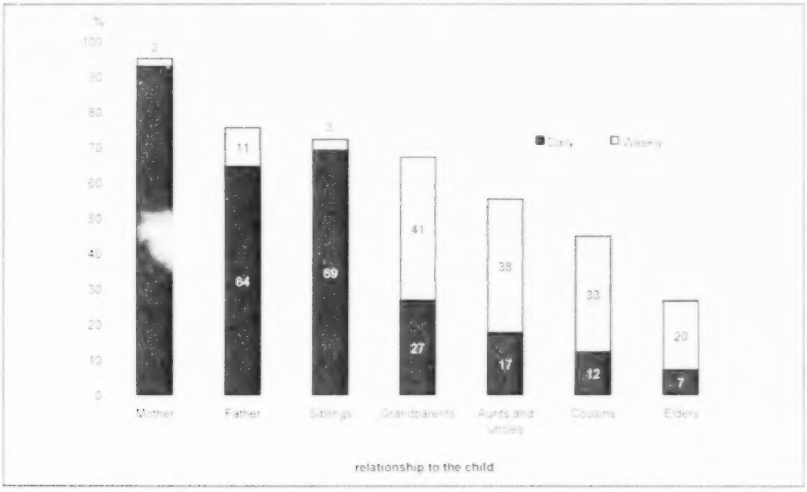
Many received focused attention from extended family and community members at least once a week: 67% from grandparents, 55% from aunts and uncles, 45% from cousins and 26% from Elders.

According to the 2006 Census, 17% of off-reserve First Nations children under the age of 6 (20% of those with Registered Indian status and 12% of those without Registered Indian status) were living in families with 4 or more children, compared to 8% of non-Aboriginal children.

Off-reserve First Nations children are being raised by younger parents than non-Aboriginal children. According to the 2006 Census, 27% of off-reserve First Nations children under six years old had mothers between the ages of 15 and 24; this is compared to 8% of non-Aboriginal children.

Just over half (52%) of First Nations children living off reserve lived with two parents. They were however, more likely than non-Aboriginal children to live with lone parents (41% compared to 13%). About 15% of off-reserve First Nations children living in lone parent families also had a grandparent living in the home.

Chart 1
Percentage of off-reserve First Nations children under six years old who talked or played together with different people, focusing attention on each other for five minutes or more, 2006



Note(s):
'Daily' includes the response categories 'More than once a day' and 'Once a day'. 'Weekly' includes the response categories 'More than once a week' and 'Once a week'.
'Mother' includes birth, step, adoptive or foster mothers. 'Father' includes birth, step, adoptive or foster fathers.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

In 2006, almost one in ten (9%) off-reserve First Nations children lived with their grandparents, compared to 5% of non-Aboriginal children.

Socio-economic status

According to the 2006 Census, nearly half (49%) of off-reserve First Nations children under the age of 6 were in low-income families, compared to 18% of non-Aboriginal children (table 1). Low income was measured by the low income cut-offs (LICOs), which refer to income levels at which families are expected to spend 20 percentage points more than average of their before tax income on food, shelter and clothing. The low income cut-offs are not applicable in the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut and on Indian reserves.

Of young off-reserve First Nations children living in large cities, 57% were living in low-income families. Young off-reserve First Nations children with Registered Indian status were more likely to live in low-income families than those without Registered Indian status (55% compared to 38%).

Off-reserve First Nations children who lived in low-income families were twice as likely to have parents or guardians who were dissatisfied with their finances and housing conditions as their counterparts who were not living with low incomes.

The majority of young off-reserve First Nations children (90%) had parents or guardians who reported that they were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with their support network from family, friends or others. There were no statistically significant differences by low-income status.

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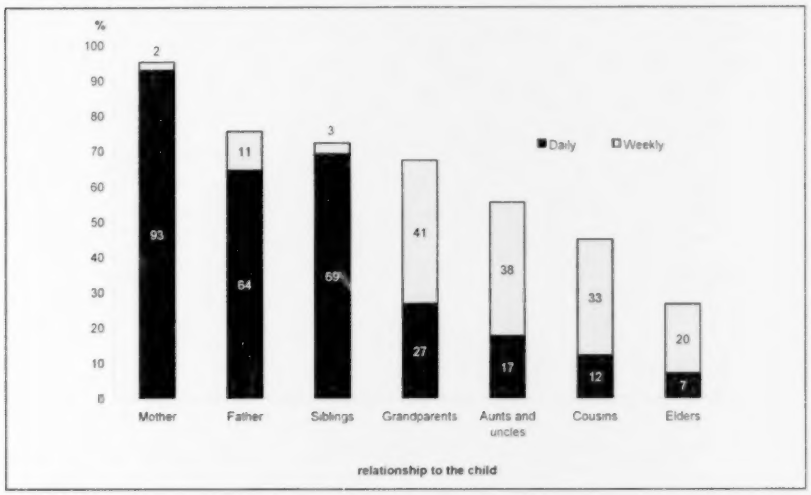

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Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*

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Table 1
Percentage of First Nations children living off reserve and non-Aboriginal children under six years old who are members of low-income families, 2006

Children under six years old	Total	Rural	Total urban	Urban - Census metropolitan areas	Urban - non-Census metropolitan areas
	percent				
Total - First Nations children living off reserve	**49**	**27**	**54**	**57**	**50**
Off-reserve First Nations children with registered Indian status	55	33	60	63	55
Off-reserve First Nations children without registered Indian status	38	18	43	45	38
Total - non-Aboriginal children	**18**	**9**	**20**	**21**	**17**

Note(s):
Census metropolitan areas (CMAs) are formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a large urban area (known as the urban core). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more must live in the urban core. Urban non-census metropolitan areas (non-CMAs) are smaller urban areas with a population of less than 100,000.Low income before tax cut-offs (LICOs) - Income levels at which families are expected to spend 20 percentage points more than average of their before tax income on food, shelter and clothing. LICOs are not applicable in the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut and on Indian reserves.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Census, 2006*

Feelings about community

The 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey found that off-reserve First Nations children had parents or guardians who were generally satisfied with many aspects of their community as a place to raise children. More than half had parents or guardians who rated their community as 'excellent' or 'very good' in terms of 'good schools, nursery schools and early childhood education programs' (53%) and 'adequate facilities for children' (51%).

By comparison, 17% of young off-reserve First Nations children lived in a community rated as 'excellent' or 'very good' in terms of being a place with First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultural activities. Half (50%) lived in a community rated as 'fair' or 'poor' as a place with these cultural activities.

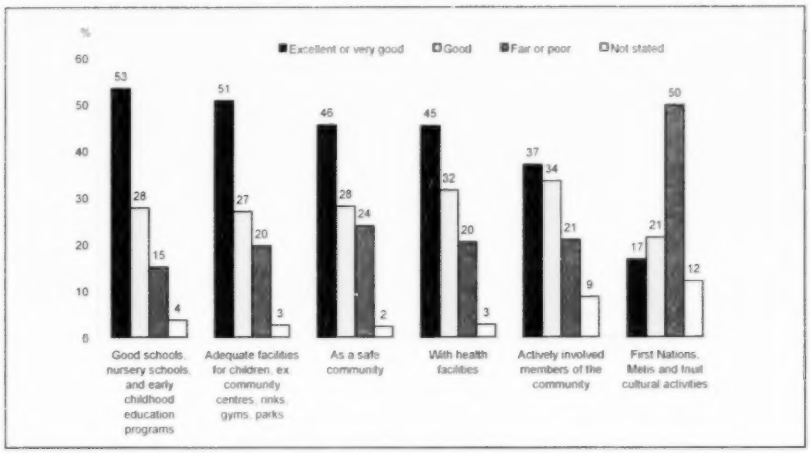
Cultural activities

According to the 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey, 46% of young off-reserve First Nations children had participated in or attended 'traditional First Nations, Métis, or Inuit activities such as singing, drum dancing, fiddling, gatherings or ceremonies'.

In 2006, 45% of off-reserve First Nations children had someone who helped them to understand First Nations history and culture. Most of these children were being taught by their parents (60%) and grandparents (50%).

Off-reserve First Nations children with Registered Indian status were more likely than those without Registered Indian status to have someone who helped them understand First Nations history or culture (54% versus 32%).

Chart 2
First Nations children under six years old (living off reserve)
How parents or guardians rated their feelings about their community as a place with...



Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*

About 47% of off-reserve First Nations children under six years old were in some kind of child care arrangement. This refers to regular care arrangements by someone other than a parent, including daycare, nursery or preschool, Head Start, before or after school programs, and care by a relative or other caregiver.

Of those children currently receiving regular child care, about 24% were in child care arrangements that promoted First Nations, Métis or Inuit traditional and cultural values and customs, and 15% were in child care arrangements where Aboriginal languages were used.

How to obtain more information

Specific inquiries about this product and related statistics or services should be directed to: Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6 by telephone: 613-951-5979 or by e-mail at sasd-dssea@statcan.gc.ca.

Statistics Canada National Contact Centre
Toll-free telephone (Canada and the United States):
Inquiries line 1-800-263-1136

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